BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION

FEBRUARY 4, 2016
Greg Fontus, IICC Program Coordinator

Talk About It Thursdays
Inclusion Initiatives & Cultural Competence
Dean of Students
Purpose

Devalue the systemic constructs that have influenced our ways of thinking in order to empower our ability to contribute to a society of social responsibility that engages in conversations surrounding diversity, inclusion, and equity here at Vanderbilt University.
Achieving social justice is both a process and a goal. “The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs.

Social justice includes a vision of society that is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.”

Reference:
Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook.
Edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin.
The process for attaining the goal of social justice...should also be 
democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human 
agency and human capabilities for working collaboratively to create 
change...

...The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop 
the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression 
and their socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop 
a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change 
oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in 
the institutions and communities they are a part.

Reference: 
*Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook.* 
Edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin.
To deepen the level of authentic dialogue amongst and across difference.

Build an awareness of how societal constructs prevent individuals from engaging in conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

To consider key elements for creating a learning environment for staff, students, and those alike to engage in conversations surrounding social justice and inclusion within the Vanderbilt community.

To share key concepts and tools for effectiveness in building an inclusive environment that is welcoming and open.
PANNING

- Pay
- Attention
- Now
...conversations we don’t want to talk about.

...conversations in which we worry what will happen if we do talk about it.

...conversations in which if we do talk about it, we usually think and feel a lot more than what we actually say.
Conversations of diversity, inclusion, and equity are necessary for creating a community of engagement and inclusivity at Vanderbilt both in and out our respective areas!

“If Vanderbilt does not address issues of diversity, inclusion and culture, and [instead] acts like everything is just fine, it will fail as an institution,” Zeppos told a standing-room-only crowd of faculty in the Student Life Center on Aug. 27.
Recent and Relevant Events

February 13\textsuperscript{th}, 2015:

Bri Golec, a transgender woman in Akron, OH was fatally stabbed by her father.
Recent and Relevant Events

March 2015:
Fraternity members at the University of Oklahoma are caught on videotape taking part in a chant that includes references to lynching and uses a racial slur to describe how the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity will never accept black members.
April 12th, 2015: Riots broke out in Baltimore, MD following the death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray in police custody.
Recent and Relevant Events

June 17, 2015: Dylan Roof mass-murdered nine people at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. In the wake of the mass shooting, South Carolina's governor called on lawmakers to remove the Confederate flag from state capitol grounds.
November 9th, 2015: Tim Wolfe, president of the University of Missouri, announced in a Monday news conference that he was resigning from his post amid a controversy regarding race relations at the school.
January 2016:
Amid concerns about a nationwide baby formula shortage, Asian parents Adrian Cheng, Reginald Dong, and Sarah Kong in separate incidents in the past month had their online orders from Woolworth for tins of baby formula cancelled with the explanation that there order was suspicious.
Recent and Relevant Events
The reason why you must ask yourself what are you doing is because these issues affect us all!

King also warned against becoming ‘so complacent that we forget the struggles of other minorities. We must unite with oppressed minorities throughout the world.’” –Troy Jackson, Becoming King: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Making of a National Leader pp. xviii
Is the conversation about diversity, inclusion, and equity difficult for you? Why or why not?

What specific conversations about diversity, inclusion, and equity are difficult for you to engage in? Why?

How would you assess yourself?

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.
Invisibility of experience or lack of education and/or skill training

“Guilt is the glue that holds prejudice in place”

Fear of anxiety, conflict, disagreement, and/or being misunderstood

Present “hurts” and “ouches” (i.e. fears, angers, or frustrations) from past experiences still remain

Lack of sensitivity or concern

Fatigue
Cycle of Oppression and Socialization


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“Difficult conversations do not just involve feelings, they are at their very core about feelings.”

— Douglas Stone, Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most
Although it is an important goal to treat each person as a unique individual, it is important to remember that many people have been mistreated, not simply as individuals but as members of a group.”

–Cherie Brown, National Coalition Building Institute
Representation
“Race is a purely invented construct that has no such correlate. It was this construct that would enable the now globally expanding West to replace the earlier mortal/immortal, natural/supernatural, human/the ancestors, the gods/God distinction as the one whose basis all human groups had millennially ‘grounded’ their descriptive statement/prescriptive statements of what it is to be human.

Race was therefore to be, in effect, the non-supernatural but no less extra-human ground of the answer that the secularizing West would now give to the Heideggerian question as to the who, and what we are.”

-Slyvia Wynter,
Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human. After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument, pp. 264
“Hellish existence in the colonial world carries with it both the racial and the gendered aspects of the naturalization of the non-ethics of war. Indeed, coloniality of Being primarily refers to the normalization of the extraordinary events that take place in war. While in war there is murder and rape, in the hell of the colonial world murder and rape become day to day occurrences and menaces. ‘Killability’ and ‘rapeability’ are inscribed into the images of the colonial bodies.’

Men of color represent a constant threat.

The Black man is depicted as an aggressive sexual beast, who desires to rape women, particularly White. The Black woman, in turn, is seeing always already sexually available to the raping gaze of the White and as fundamentally promiscuous. The Black woman is seeing as a highly erotic being whose primary function is fulling sexual desire and reproduction.”

-Nelson Maldonado-Torress, 

*ON THE COLONIALITY OF BEING: Contributions to the Development of a Concept, pp. 253*
“Women deserved to be raped and to suffer the consequences – in terms of lack of protection from the legal system, further sexual abuse, and lack of financial assistance to sustain herself and her family- just as the black man deserve to be penalized for raping, even without committing such an act.”

‘Killability’ and ‘rapeability’ are part of their essence- understood in a phenomenological way.”

-Nelson Maldonado-Torress,

ON THE COLONIALITY OF BEING: Contributions to the Development of a Concept, pp. 253
Conversations about diversity, inclusion, and equity are important in order for us to work towards demystifying and dismantling the negative representations associated with it.

A demystification and dismantling of those representations helps to move us along in the process and goal of achieving a community of social responsibility.
Speak Out!

- How has/is your identity(ies) being historically and currently represented?
- How do you see your identity(ies) being represented at Vanderbilt?
- How would you like your identity(ies) to be represented?
Conversations need to be about Learning
Learning Conversation

Explores the **PROCESS** of about one’s experience as opposed to the **CONTENT** about there identity.
**Learning Conversation**

- May be a shared two way conversation about the subject.
- It is always aimed at being enabling and empowering.
- It focuses on how one’s current experience has evolved or taken shape in like of historical influences.
- It uses skills such as paraphrasing, reflecting, empathic listening, clarifying, questioning, immediacy and appropriate challenging.
- It encourages reflection of privilege.
Behavior Modification

All education is behavior modification.
Behavior Modification

Authentic dialogue develops sensitivities

Sensitivities form frames.

Frames dictate behavior.
Tools For the Conversation

- Realize Reality
- Embrace Reality
- Assess Yourself - What Are You Doing?
- Lean Towards Vulnerability
- Take Into Consideration
  - Historical Representations
- Attempt to Learn
- Live as an Agent For Change
- Keep At It

R.E.A.L. T.A.L.K.
"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends,"

-Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Diversity Toolkit

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/iicc/resources/diversity/
Next Talk About It Thursday...

**Cultural Competence and Higher Education**

*Description:* This session will provide participants with an understanding of multiculturalism and cultural competence within the broad context of higher education. Participants will look at current trends, statistics, and events that make up the campus climates across the country in order to work more effectively with diverse populations.

*Date:* March 3, 2016  
*Time:* 12:00 – 1:30pm  
*Location:* Sarratt 216/220  
*Facilitator:* Kehsi Iman Wilson
Brief Assessment

1. What is one thing you learned today?
2. How could this session have been better?
3. Would you like a follow up session on the content that was discussed today?
Stay Connected.

Sarratt Student Center 337
Office Location

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